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April 16, 2002 LB 945, 994

are adopted.

CLERK: Senator Wickersham would move to amend, AM3686.
(Legislative Journal pages 1687-1693.)

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Wickersham, you're recognized to open on AM3686 to LB 994.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. This amendment is a bill, it was LB 945, if you want to look that up on your machine. What it does is allow county treasurers and others to accept payment in electronic forms. And what we're primarily interested in here is the payment of taxes with electronic processes. We started down this road awhile ago. Senator Cudaback had a bill that had to do with debit cards, I believe, where you could pay with those kinds of items. But what happens is that there is always a charge for the electronic payment or at least some forms of it, and a county could not collect, for example, taxes, and take less than the amount of tax owed. In other words, they could not take the transaction fee out of the amount of taxes. What this authorizes counties to do is to charge a fee for accepting the electronic payment. Now, if persons want to participate and make their payments electronically, then they would pay the fee. If they don't, they won't so it isn't anything that is mandatory, but the fact of the matter is that the counties needed authorization simply to charge the fee. They couldn't...they just couldn't do it without having separate authorization to do that. There is a provision in the amendment that says that the surcharge or convenience fee shall not exceed the surcharge or convenience fee imposed by the credit card or charge card companies or third party merchant banks which have contracted with the county or other political subdivision to accept or to handle the electronic payments so this isn't going to become a profit center for the county treasurer or other political subdivisions. It just doesn't work that way, but what we did have to have was an authorization to charge a fee for the electronic transfer, and, again, I'll say primarily what we're interested in, of course, is being able to collect taxes in this form. Many people would now find it quite convenient to do that. They're getting quite used to doing that. In fact, if